

## **Quotes for White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health Listening Session**

“From our 9,000-plus farms, to a bustling food-processing sector, to our ports and transportation hubs, the Garden State is an important food producer and provider to our nation and the world, and a key link in the food and nutrition complex,” **said Douglas Fisher, Secretary of New Jersey Department of Agriculture**. “As Secretary of Agriculture, of course the first thing that always comes to my mind is the importance of our farmers, as they are where food starts, and food security is one of the bedrock necessities of any nation’s stability and prosperity.”

“Food insecurity is a concern for many families, and with food prices on the rise, it is critical that we continue to use every tool at our disposal to support families in need,” **said Deputy Commissioner of Social Services Elisa Neira**. “The Murphy administration is committed to ending food insecurity and has taken numerous steps to get us closer to this mission. At Human Services, we have worked to enhance access to nutritious food through online SNAP grocery shopping, and made managing benefits more efficient through the ConnectEBT app. We have also increased opportunities for SNAP outreach and application assistance in the community. But there’s always more work to be done. I want to thank Senator Booker and Speaker Coughlin for their leadership on this issue and ensuring that the voices of New Jersey families are heard at the federal level. We will continue our work to ensure access to healthy foods for all families in New Jersey.”

“We are grateful for the leadership and partnership Senator Booker and Speaker Coughlin have shown for addressing and ending hunger in our state and in our country,” **said the CEO’s of New Jersey’s five food banks**. “Today, we still continue to see increased demand for food throughout New Jersey. We recognize that bold solutions to food, nutrition and health require broad support, and New Jersey’s food banks stand ready to partner with public and private sector stakeholders to advance those solutions.”

“This New Jersey Listening Session provides a critical opportunity for people in the Garden State to share their stories and ideas on how to address hunger with the goal of informing the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health being held in September,” **said Lisa Pitz, Director of Hunger Free New Jersey**. “The White House Conference, the first in over 50 years, is a chance to improve outcomes for those struggling with hunger and food insecurity by introducing sweeping changes to America’s existing food and nutrition policy.”

"We commend Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) and General Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin for convening anti-hunger leaders and people with lived experience to discuss policy solutions to end hunger in America," **said Geri Henchy, director of Nutrition Policy at the Food Research & Action Center**. "Far too many families in New Jersey and across the country continue to lack reliable access to the nutrition they need. Matters would be even worse if not for federal nutrition programs such as SNAP, WIC, and the school, summer and child care meals programs. The upcoming White House conference provides an opportunity to strengthen these proven programs and address the root causes of hunger.

“In 2022, skyrocketing food costs combined with the ending of COVID-19 benefits are exacerbating hunger and food insecurity,” **said Darrin Anderson, Sr., Chief Executive Officer of the New Jersey YMCA State Alliance.** “With more support, YMCAs can further their impact and better serve more New Jerseyans.”

“Production ag farmers can play a greater role in delivering fresh produce in under-served urban areas through coordinated community markets,” **said Peter Furey, Executive Director of the New Jersey Farm Bureau.**

"Being a trusted partner in health means caring for the community in a proactive way and creating programs that empower people to achieve maximal quality of life," **said Debra Moran, Vice President, Community Based Services, Virtua Health.** “Virtua Health is investing in innovative services that address food security and other social determinants of health, such as a mobile grocery store, mobile farmers market, and a food-prescription program. Collectively, we are improving access, advocating for equity, and advancing health literacy. Thank you to Senator Booker and Speaker Coughlin for championing federal and state efforts to address food access."

“As food system practitioners, our team at City Green is excited to have the opportunity to share our priorities at the listening session hosted by Senator Booker and Speaker Coughlin,” **said Lisa Martin, Director of Food Access and Grant Writer, City Green, Inc.** “We’re grateful to work with leaders who are dedicated to hearing from frontline organizations like ours, and to share the importance of investing in programs like Good Food Bucks, which make healthy food more affordable for people who use SNAP and support local farmers and businesses.”